MARVEL LEGACY RED LEDGER PART 4 (OF 5)

103

ROSENBERG
FOREMAN
ROSENBERG

TALES OF SUSPENSE featuring HAWKEYE® and the WINTER SOLDIER™

SORRENTINO 17

Black Widow died. Everyone saw it happen.

Hawkeye and the Winter Soldier both dated her (it's awkward).

Hawkeye thinks she's alive (and maybe killing other spies).

The Winter Soldier thinks she's dead (and someone else is killing spies).

Turns out Hawkeye was right, because Natasha just showed up to shoot the ex-Red Room agent they were talking to. But she definitely died…right?

TALES OF SUSPENSE

EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL AND NOTHING HURT

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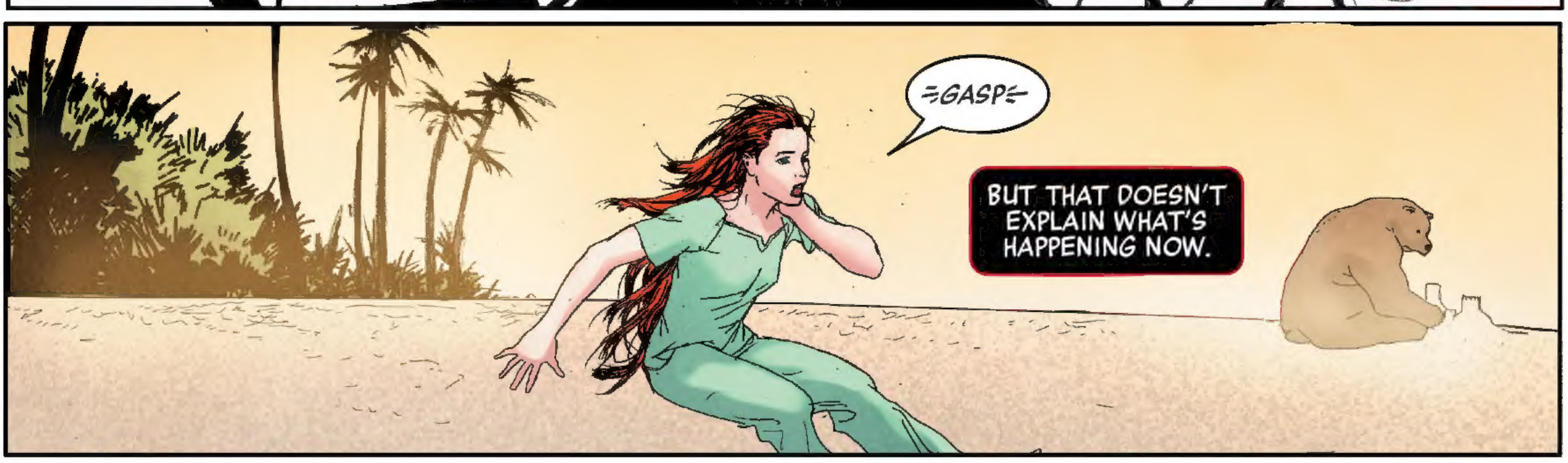
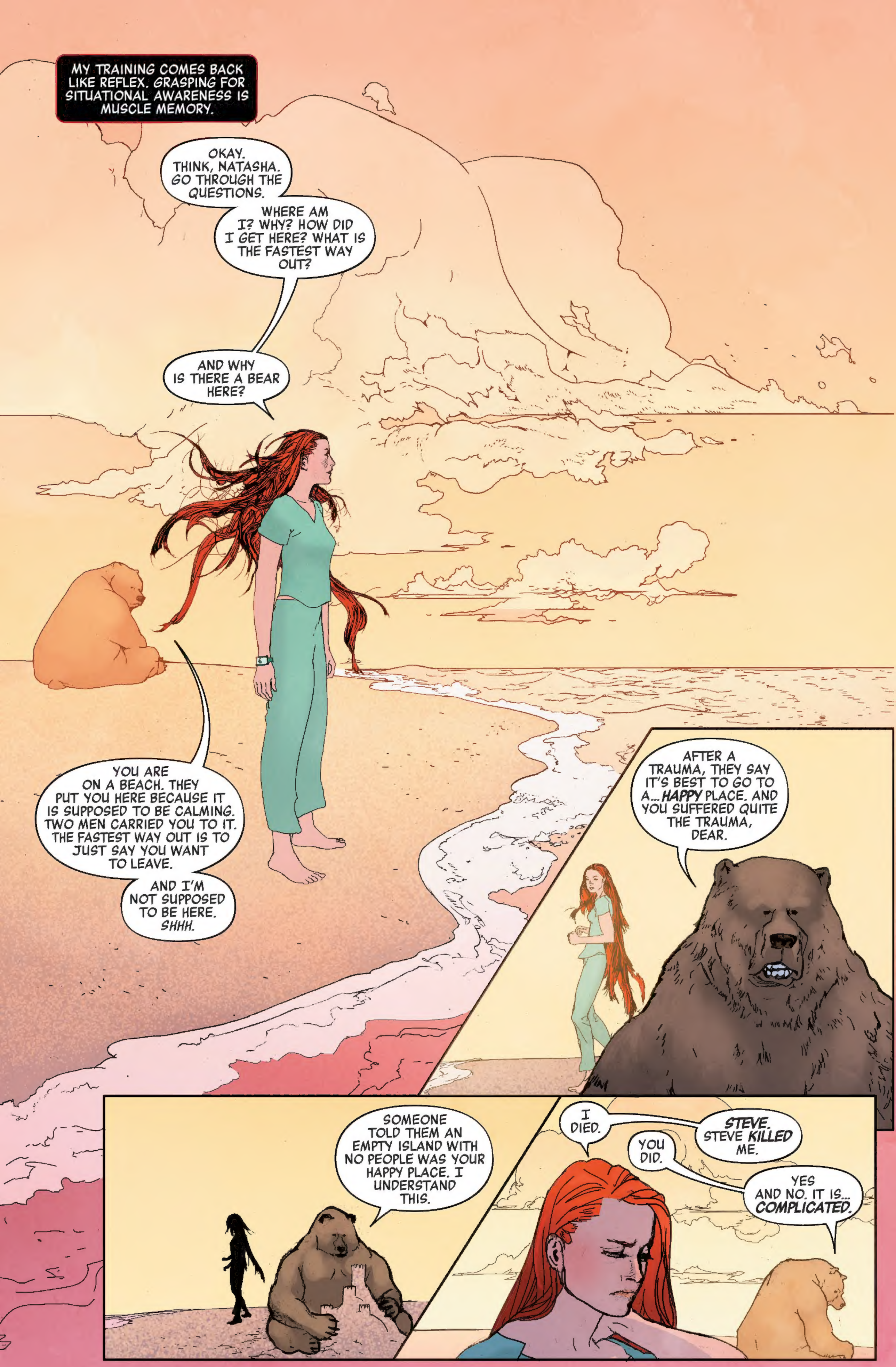
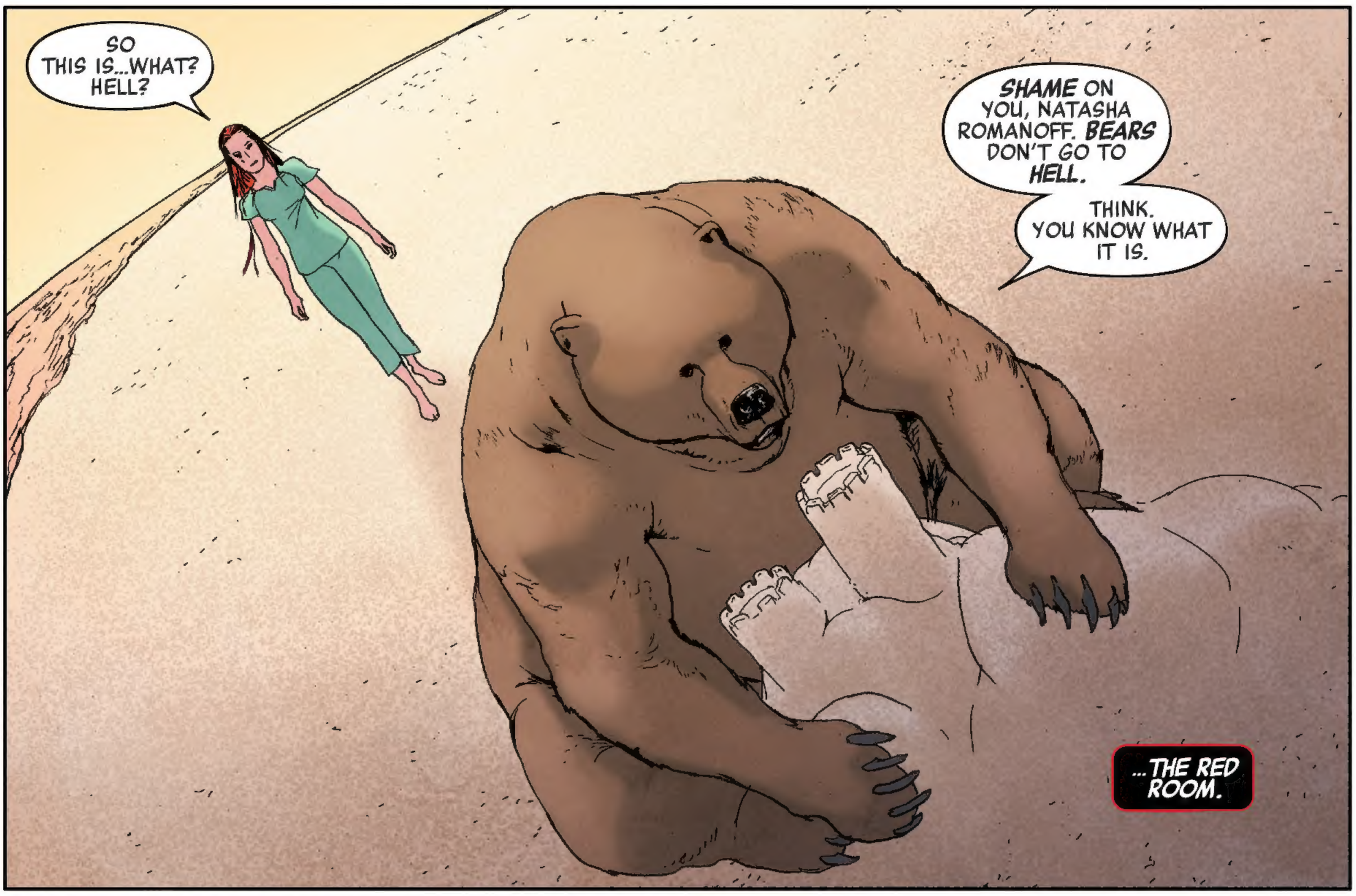
A MONTH AGO.
IT FEELS LIKE I'VE BEEN ASLEEP FOR DAYS. I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO WAKE UP YET.

THEN I REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.
I WAS FIGHTING CAPTAIN AMERICA. HE KILLED ME.

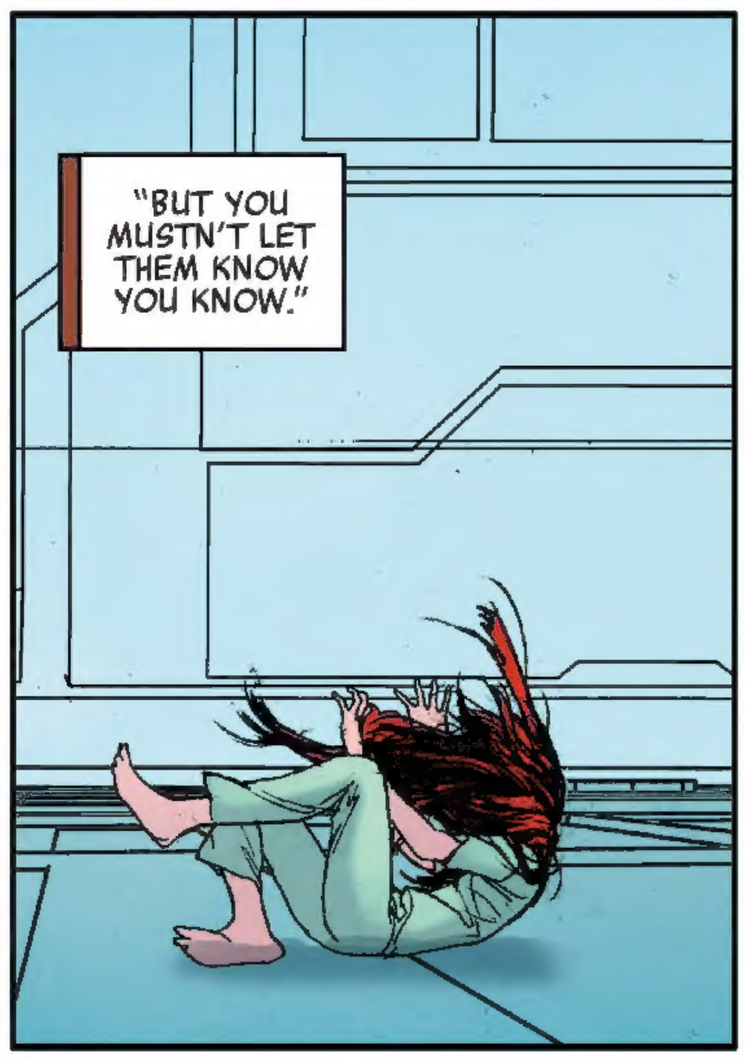

=GASP=
BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW.

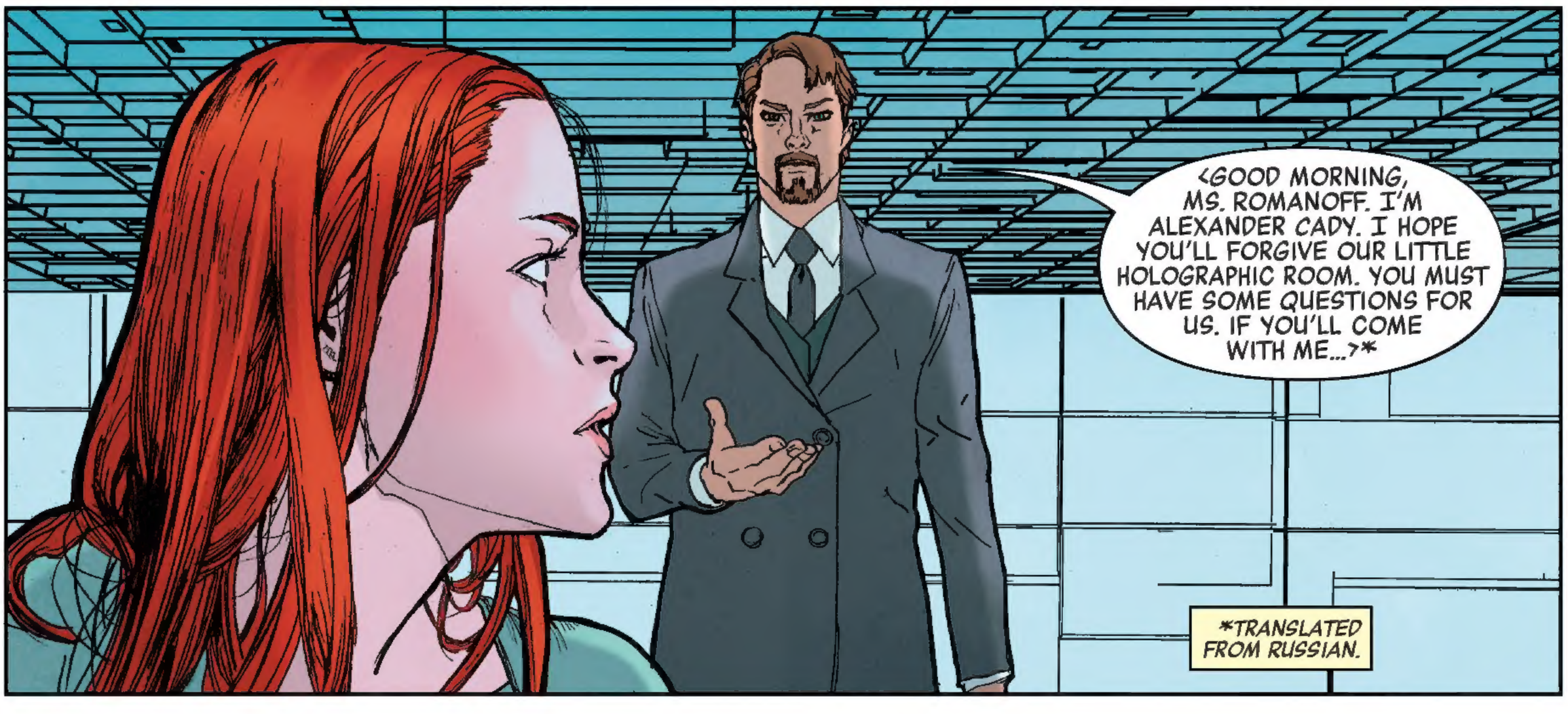

MY TRAINING COMES BACK LIKE REFLEX. GRASPING FOR SITUATIONAL AWARENESS IS MUSCLE MEMORY.
OKAY. THINK, NATASHA. GO THROUGH THE QUESTIONS.
WHERE AM I? WHY? HOW DID I GET HERE? WHAT IS THE FASTEST WAY OUT?
AND WHY IS THERE A BEAR HERE?
YOU ARE ON A BEACH. THEY PUT YOU HERE BECAUSE IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE CALMING. TWO MEN CARRIED YOU TO IT. THE FASTEST WAY OUT IS TO JUST SAY YOU WANT TO LEAVE.
AND I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE. SHHH.
AFTER A TRAUMA, THEY SAY IT'S BEST TO GO TO A... HAPPY PLACE. AND YOU SUFFERED QUITE THE TRAUMA, DEAR.
SOMEONE TOLD THEM AN EMPTY ISLAND WITH NO PEOPLE WAS YOUR HAPPY PLACE. I UNDERSTAND THIS.
I DIED.
YOU DID.
STEVE. STEVE KILLED ME.
YES AND NO. IT IS... COMPLICATED.


SO THIS IS...WHAT? HELL?
SHAME ON YOU, NATASHA ROMANOFF. BEARS DON'T GO TO HELL.
THINK. YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS.
...THE RED ROOM.

THEY HAVE WAYS OF BRINGING YOU BACK.
SO IT'S REAL? I DIED? I CLEARLY REMEMBER WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO DIE.
THAT WOULD BE MY FAULT.

WHAT THIS IS...WHAT THEY HAVE BECOME. IT'S NOT RIGHT. JUST BECAUSE YOU BRING SOMEONE BACK TO LIFE DOESN'T MEAN YOU OWN THAT LIFE.


"BUT YOU MUSTN'T LET THEM KNOW YOU KNOW."


<GOOD MORNING, MS. ROMANOFF. I'M ALEXANDER CADY. I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE OUR LITTLE HOLOGRAPHIC ROOM. YOU MUST HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR US. IF YOU'LL COME WITH ME...?*
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.

<URSA MAJOR? YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN HERE.>

<APOLOGIES, COMRADE CADY. I GET LOST SO EASILY THESE DAYS.>

<SO... THE BEAR WAS REAL?>

<UNFORTUNATELY. YOU DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE GREAT SOVIET HERO URSA MAJOR?>

<ALL BEARS LOOK ALIKE TO ME.>

<DON'T TELL *HIM* THAT.>

<GREETINGS, NATASHA. SO NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK AT THE RED ROOM.>

<I DON'T KNOW THESE MEN. OR YOU.>

<SOME THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE. IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE...YOUR LAST OPERATION.>

<WHAT *HAPPENED* TO ME?>

<YOU WERE INJURED ON A MISSION AND HAVE BEEN RECUPERATING HERE, BECAUSE THE RED ROOM IS LOYAL TO ITS OWN. BUT YOU ARE RECOVERED NOW.>

<AND YOU ARE STILL LOYAL TO THE RED ROOM, YES?>

<OF COURSE, COMRADE.>

<GOOD...>

"<...THEN WE HAVE A MISSION FOR YOU NOW.>
"<HYDRA AND S.H.I.E.L.D. HAVE DISMANTLED EACH OTHER.>
"<OUR ENEMIES ARE VULNERABLE.>
SEMTEX
"<IT IS TIME FOR US TO FINISH THEM.>"

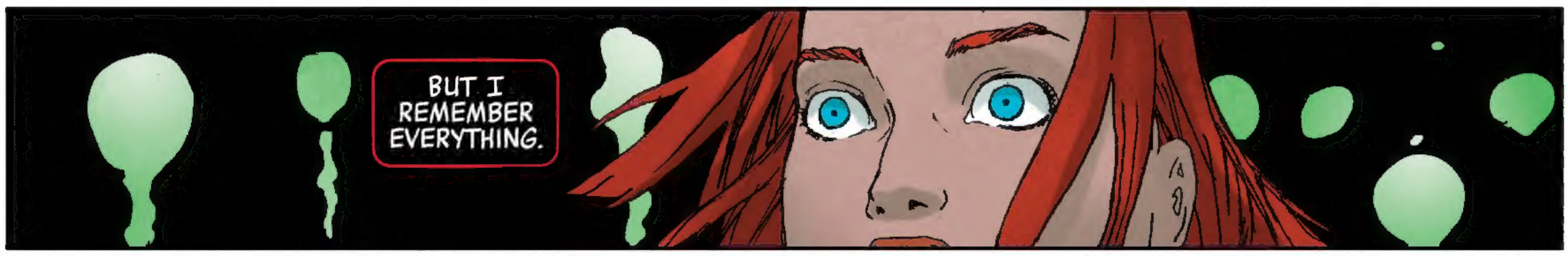
THE RED ROOM.
WEEKS LATER.
<THE MOVE WENT SMOOTHLY, BUT I STILL DO NOT LIKE IT HERE.>
<YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT AT HOME.>
<AT LEAST AT HOME I COULD GET DECENT VARENIKI. I'M GOING TO REQUEST A TRANSFER AS SOON AS I CAN. THEY CAN SEND ME ANYWHERE WARM.>

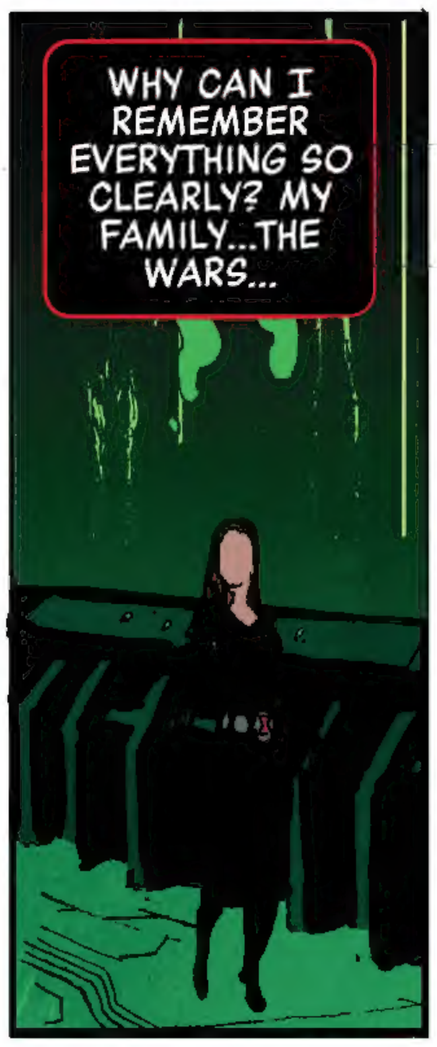
NO...

THIS IS...*THIS* IS WHAT I AM? THEY REMADE ME?

0930X-9

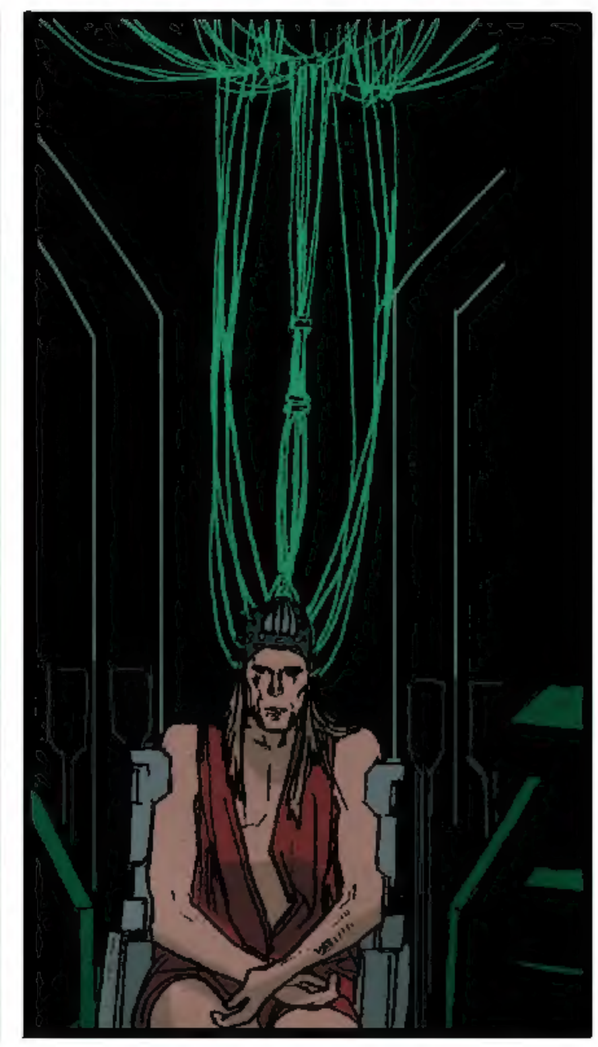
NATASHA 0930X-7

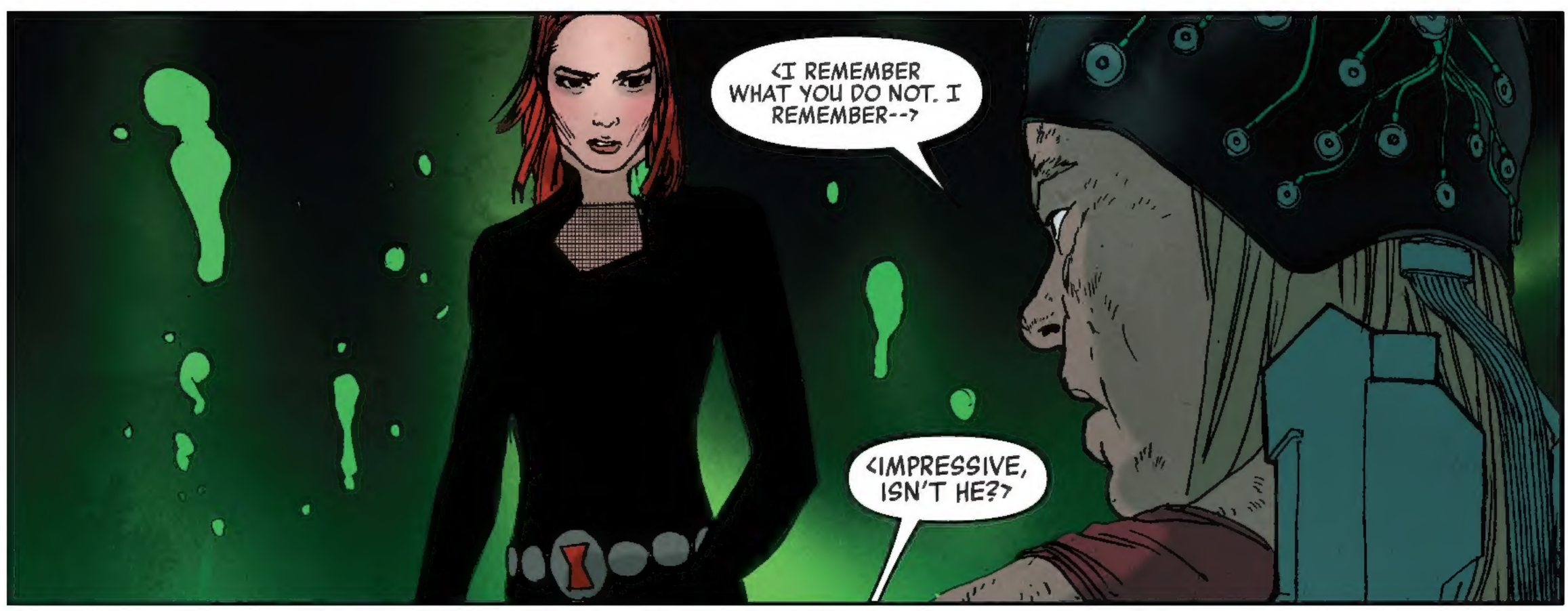



WHY CAN I REMEMBER EVERYTHING SO CLEARLY? MY FAMILY...THE WARS...

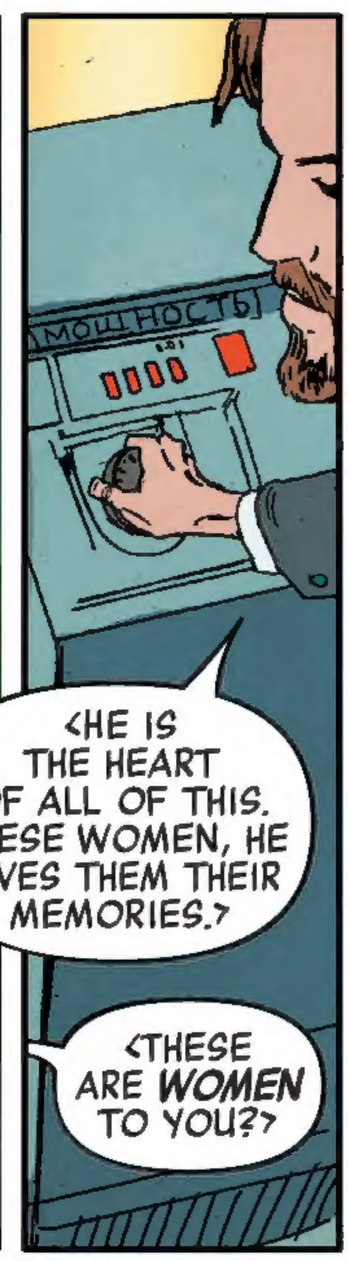
BOZHE MOI!

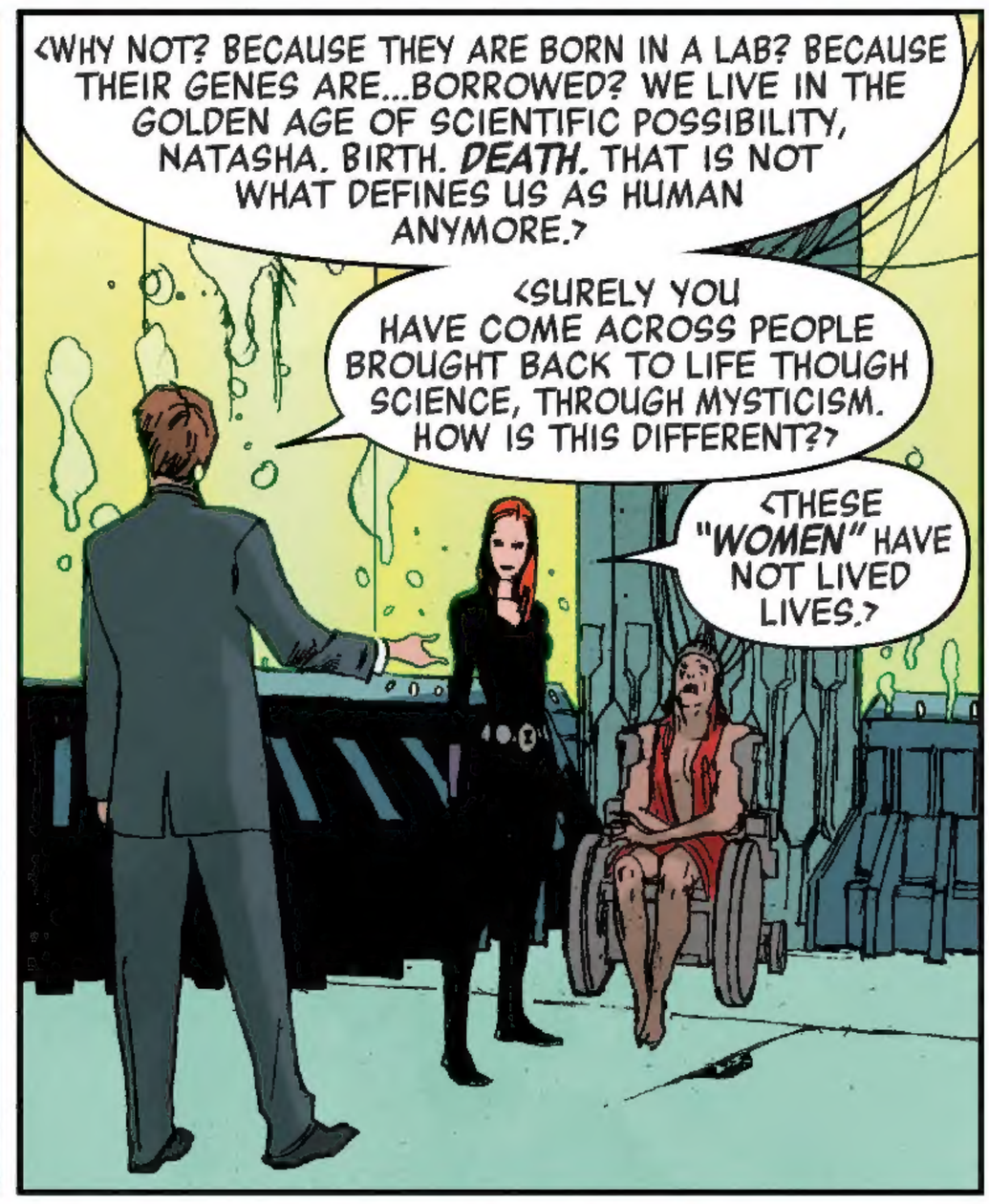
<I REMEMBER.>
WHAT?

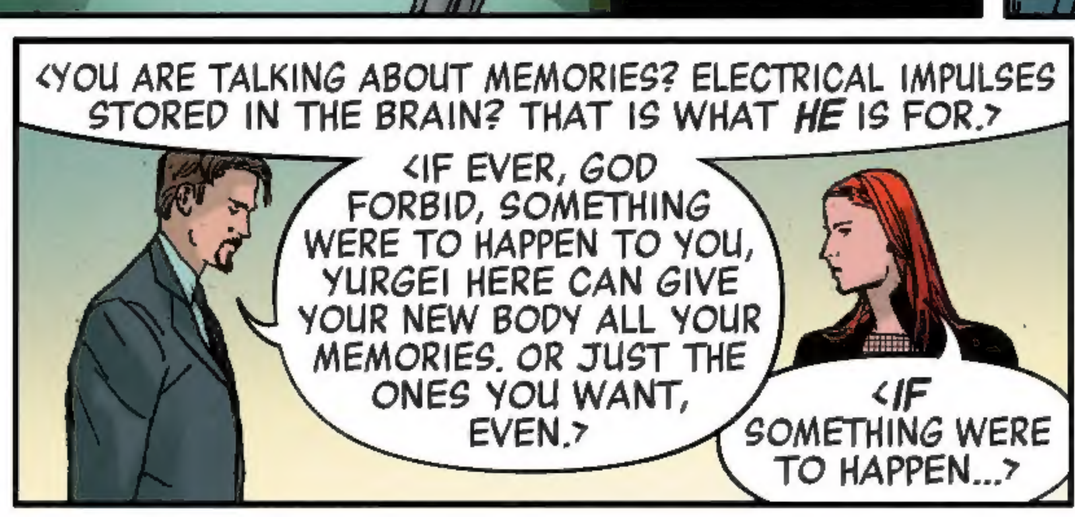


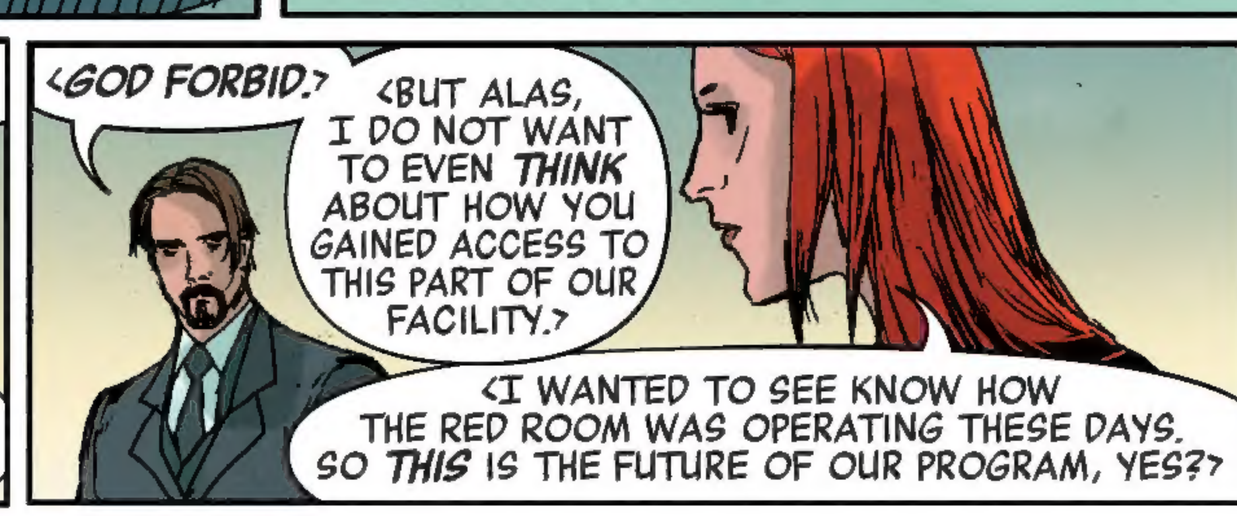

<I REMEMBER WHAT YOU DO NOT. I REMEMBER-->
<IMPRESSIVE, ISN'T HE?>

<WELL, MAYBE NOT ON THE SURFACE. BUT HE *IS* A WONDER.>
<WHO IS HE?>
<YURGEI IVANOV. CODENAME EPSILON RED. OUR PSYCHIC PATRIOT.>


<HE IS THE HEART OF ALL OF THIS. THESE WOMEN, HE GIVES THEM THEIR MEMORIES.>
<THESE ARE *WOMEN* TO YOU?>


<WHY NOT? BECAUSE THEY ARE BORN IN A LAB? BECAUSE THEIR GENES ARE...BORROWED? WE LIVE IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCIENTIFIC POSSIBILITY, NATASHA. BIRTH. *DEATH.* THAT IS NOT WHAT DEFINES US AS HUMAN ANYMORE.>
<SURELY YOU HAVE COME ACROSS PEOPLE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE THOUGH SCIENCE, THROUGH MYSTICISM. HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?>
<THESE "*WOMEN*" HAVE NOT LIVED LIVES.>


<YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT MEMORIES? ELECTRICAL IMPULSES STORED IN THE BRAIN? THAT IS WHAT *HE* IS FOR.>
<IF EVER, GOD FORBID, SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO YOU, YURGEI HERE CAN GIVE YOUR NEW BODY ALL YOUR MEMORIES. OR JUST THE ONES YOU WANT, EVEN.>
<*IF* SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN...>


<*GOD FORBID.*>
<BUT ALAS, I DO NOT WANT TO EVEN *THINK* ABOUT HOW YOU GAINED ACCESS TO THIS PART OF OUR FACILITY.>
<I WANTED TO SEE KNOW HOW THE RED ROOM WAS OPERATING THESE DAYS. SO *THIS* IS THE FUTURE OF OUR PROGRAM, YES?>

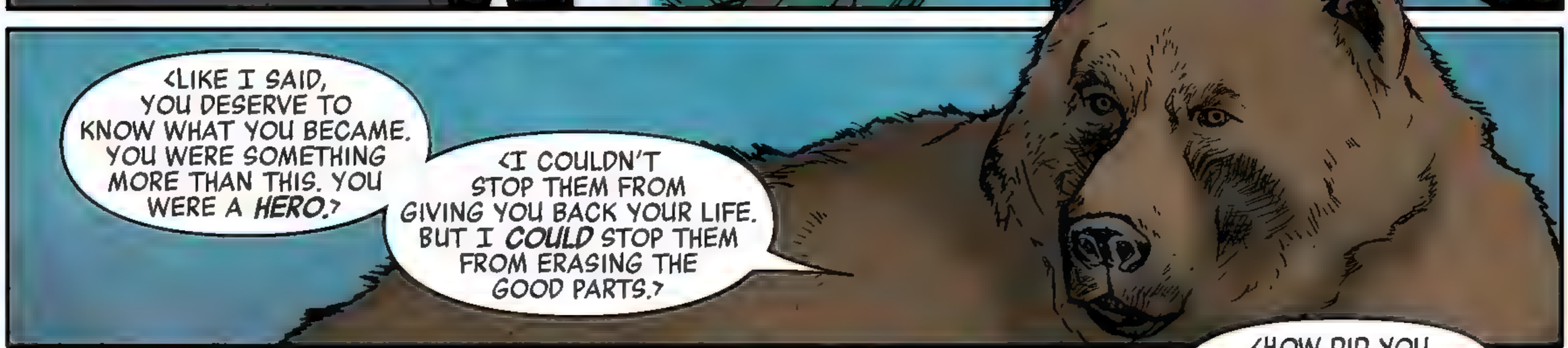
<NO. IT IS NOT.>
<THERE WAS A DARK TIME WHEN THIS SEEMED LIKE THE FUTURE. BUT THANKFULLY, THINGS HAVE TURNED AROUND AGAIN. WE LOOK FORWARD BY LOOKING TO OUR GLORIOUS PAST.>

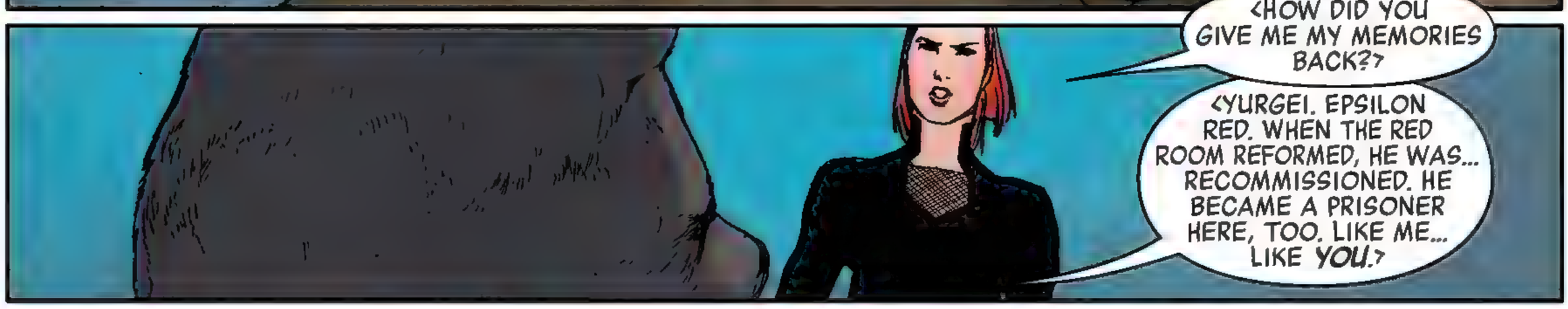
<YOU REMEMBER THIS, DON'T YOU, NATASHA?>

<HELLO, CHILDREN. WE HAVE A SPECIAL GUEST INSTRUCTOR TODAY. MISS ROMANOFF IS HERE TO GIVE YOU ALL AN IMPORTANT LESSON.>
<I AM?>

<PLEASE TEACH THE CHILDREN THE PROPER WAY TO EXECUTE A PRISONER.>

BEARS ILLUSTRATED
BANG BANG BANG
<YOU TOLD ME THAT IT WAS YOUR FAULT I COULD REMEMBER MY WHOLE LIFE. MY DEATH. WHY?>
<WHY?>
<BY ALL MEANS, COME IN.>


<LIKE I SAID, YOU DESERVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU BECAME. YOU WERE SOMETHING MORE THAN THIS. YOU WERE A HERO.>
<I COULDN'T STOP THEM FROM GIVING YOU BACK YOUR LIFE. BUT I COULD STOP THEM FROM ERASING THE GOOD PARTS.>


<HOW DID YOU GIVE ME MY MEMORIES BACK?>
<YURGEI. EPSILON RED. WHEN THE RED ROOM REFORMED, HE WAS... RECOMMISSIONED. HE BECAME A PRISONER HERE, TOO. LIKE ME... LIKE YOU.>

<HE HAS A PSYCHIC BOND WITH ALL OF THE WIDOWS, ALTHOUGH THEY DON'T KNOW IT. HE STORES THEIR MEMORIES IN HIS OWN, LIKE A BANK. AND WHEN ONE OF YOU DIES...THE RED ROOM MAKES A WITHDRAWAL.>
<I SIMPLY... BRIBED HIM TO BREAK PROTOCOL. GIVE BACK EVERYTHING.>
<BRIBED HIM WITH WHAT?>

...
<MY FUR. HE LOVES MY FUR. I LET HIM PET ME.>
<IS THIS THE FIRST TIME I'VE DIED?>
<WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE NOW?>
...
SO YOU... YOU WANT ME TO DESTROY THIS?
WE SWITCH TO ENGLISH. OKAY.
I LOVE MY COUNTRY. I LOVE RUSSIA. I DEFEND IT WITH HONOR.
BUT THIS? I AM A PRISONER WHERE I WAS ONCE A SOLDIER.
NO FREEDOM EVEN IN DEATH, IT WOULD SEEM. NO HONOR.
SO, YES. I WANT YOU TO DESTROY THIS PLACE. ALL OF IT. I WANT YOU TO DESTROY US.
WHAT IF I HAVE A BETTER PLAN?

FOUR DAYS LATER.

<THE OPERATION IN CHERNAYA WAS A SUCCESS. WITH THE DEATH OF AMBASSADOR ANTONE, BOTH U.S. AND HYDRA INFLUENCE IN THE REGION WAS WEAKENED ENOUGH TO ALLOW GENERAL PETROV'S COUP TO TAKE ROOT QUICKLY.>

<BARRING ANY COMPLICATIONS, PETROV'S REGIME WILL BE RECOGNIZED BY THE U.N. AND BECOME A POWERFUL ALLY FOR US IN THE REGION.>

<NEXT SLIDE.>

<BUT THERE WAS ONE COMPLICATION.>

CLICK

<ONE OF OUR AGENTS, THE WINTER SOLDIER, HAS GONE ROGUE. HE HAS TEAMED UP WITH AN AMERICAN SUPER HERO CALLED HAWKEYE. THEY ARE HUNTING *YOU*, BLACK WIDOW.>

<AM I TO KILL THEM?>

<NEXT.>

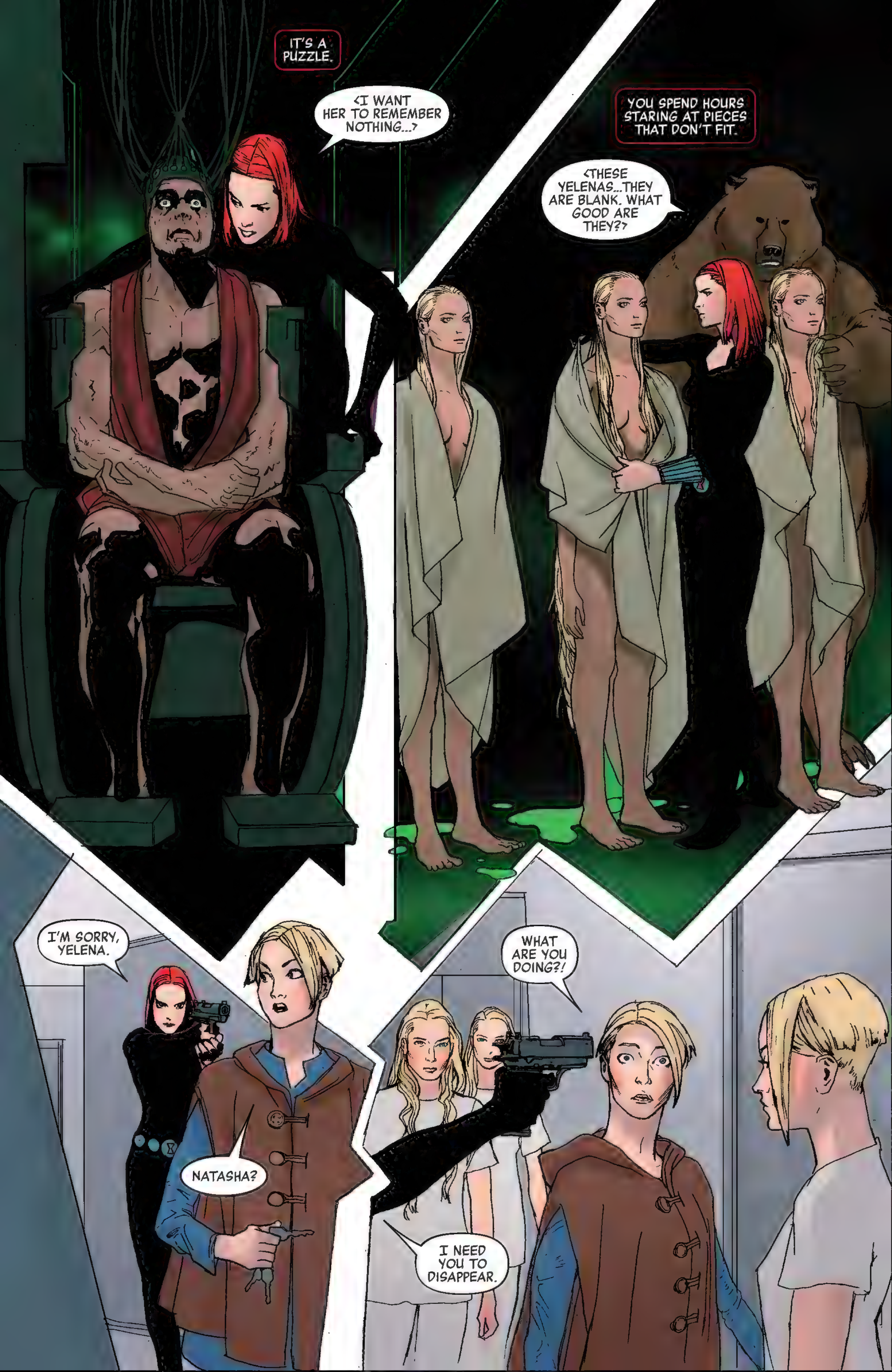
<IF POSSIBLE, YES. WE CANNOT RISK THEM FINDING US.>

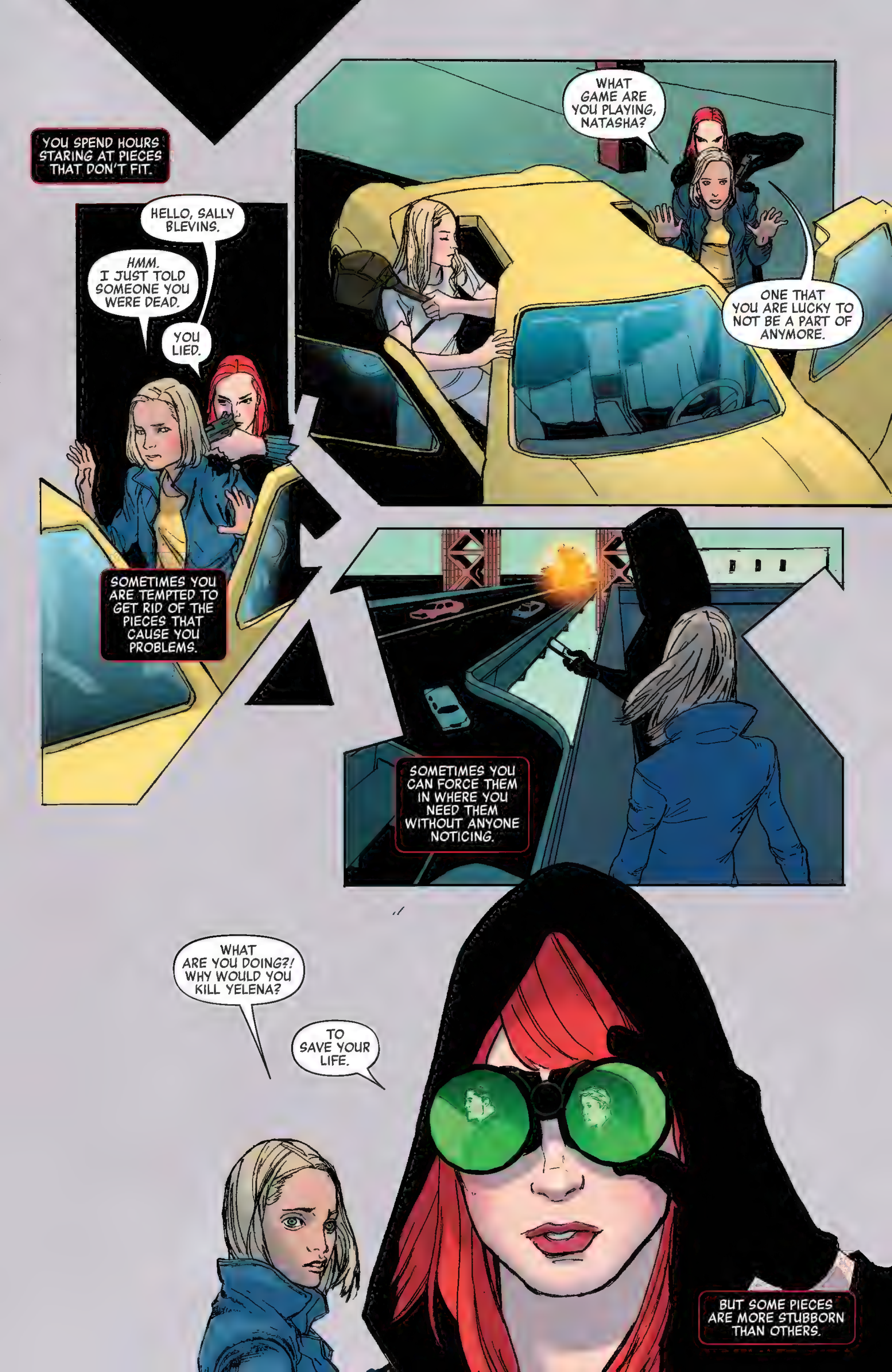
<BUT WE ALSO CANNOT RISK YOU BEING CAPTURED. THAT IS WHY YOUR INITIAL TARGET WILL BE THIS WOMAN. SALLY BLEVINS. ANOTHER AMERICAN SUPER HERO PLAYING SPY. KILL HER.>

<SHE IS A S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENT?>

<YES. IS THAT A *PROBLEM?*>

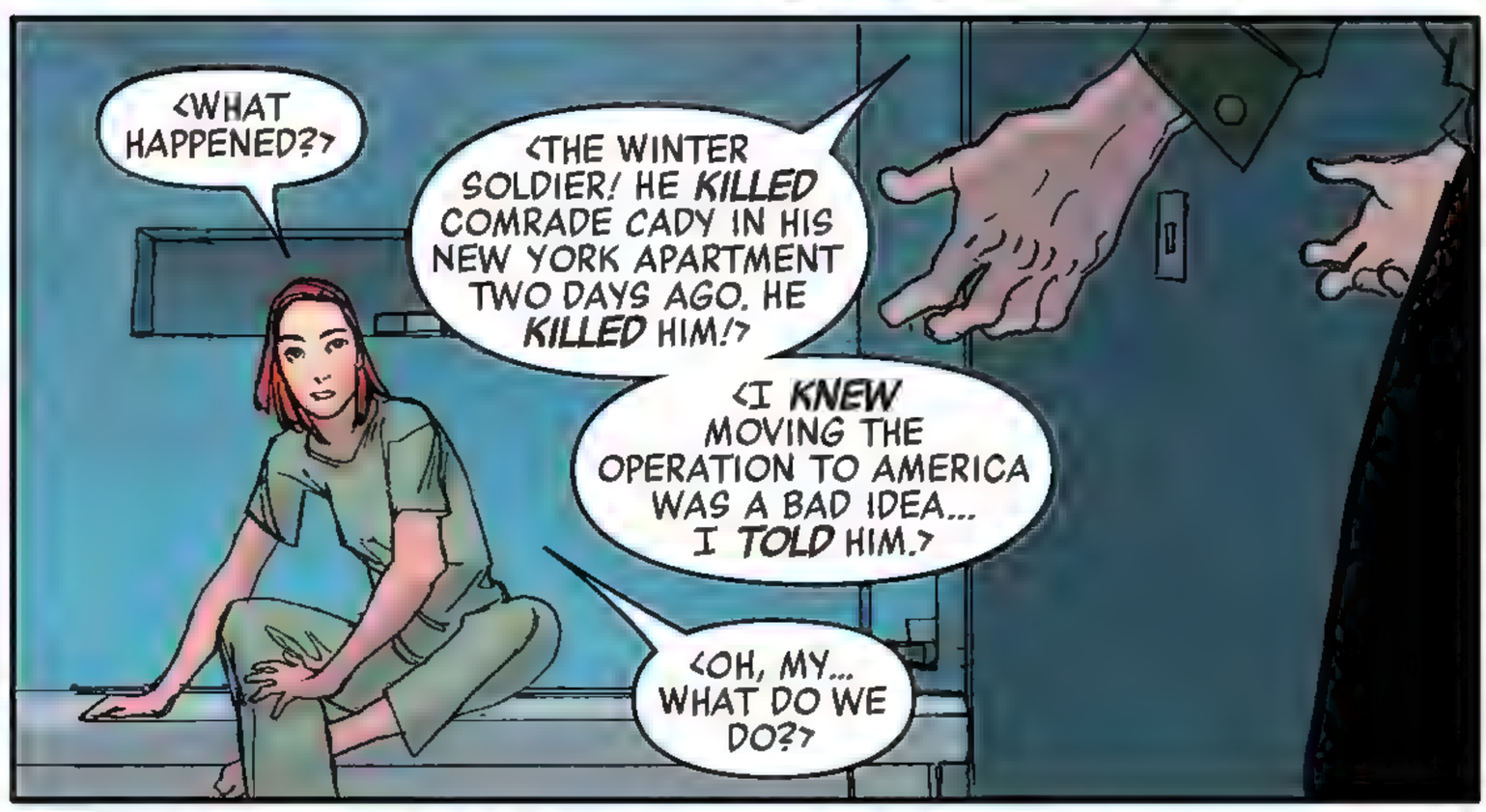
NYET.


IT'S A PUZZLE.
<I WANT HER TO REMEMBER NOTHING...>
YOU SPEND HOURS STARING AT PIECES THAT DON'T FIT.
<THESE YELENAS...THEY ARE BLANK. WHAT GOOD ARE THEY?>
I'M SORRY, YELENA.
NATASHA?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I NEED YOU TO DISAPPEAR.


YOU SPEND HOURS STARING AT PIECES THAT DON'T FIT.
HELLO, SALLY BLEVINS.
HMM. I JUST TOLD SOMEONE YOU WERE DEAD.
YOU LIED.
SOMETIMES YOU ARE TEMPTED TO GET RID OF THE PIECES THAT CAUSE YOU PROBLEMS.
WHAT GAME ARE YOU PLAYING, NATASHA?
ONE THAT YOU ARE LUCKY TO NOT BE A PART OF ANYMORE.
SOMETIMES YOU CAN FORCE THEM IN WHERE YOU NEED THEM WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! WHY WOULD YOU KILL YELENA?
TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.
BUT SOME PIECES ARE MORE STUBBORN THAN OTHERS.

‹WHY AM I DOING THIS?›
‹BECAUSE I WAS SLOPPY. THEY SAW ME ON THE BRIDGE. I NEED YOU TO MAKE THEM DOUBT THAT IT WAS ME.›
SLOWLY A PICTURE TAKES SHAPE.
OH, BOYS. HOW I LOVE WATCHING YOU WORK.
WHAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES EASY.
‹CALM DOWN, YELENA. THEY JUST LET YOU GO? MEET ME IN FIFTEEN MINUTES. YOU KNOW WHERE.›
BANG
YOU SEE EXACTLY WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...
...AND THOSE FINAL PIECES FALL INTO PLACE, SHOWING YOU WHAT WAS IN FRONT OF YOU ALL ALONG.
NATASHA...?
COMRADE CADY. I NEEDED TO SEE YOU.

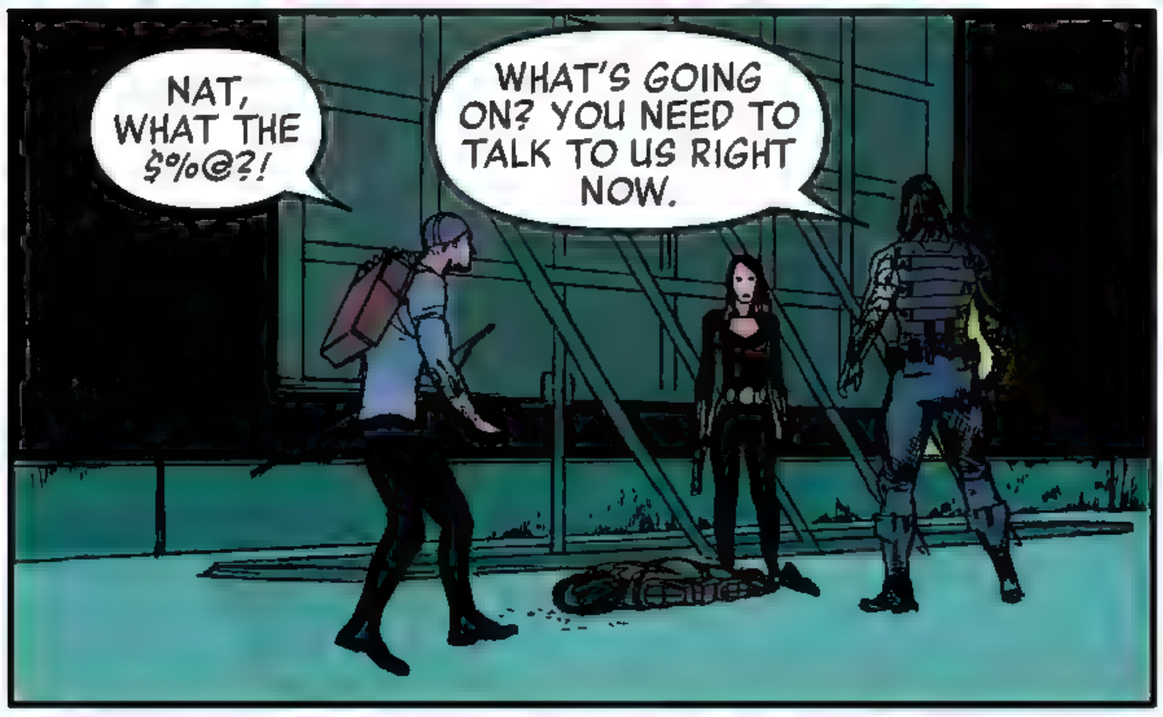
<STUPID LITTLE GIRL! YOU SAID THEY WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM! YOU ASSURED US YOU COULD HANDLE IT!>


<WHAT HAPPENED?>
<THE WINTER SOLDIER! HE KILLED COMRADE CADY IN HIS NEW YORK APARTMENT TWO DAYS AGO. HE KILLED HIM!>
<I KNEW MOVING THE OPERATION TO AMERICA WAS A BAD IDEA... I TOLD HIM.>
<OH, MY... WHAT DO WE DO?>

<WHO KNOWS HOW CLOSE HE COULD BE GETTING. HE COULD BE ON HIS WAY NOW. WE ARE ENACTING HIBERNATION PROTOCOLS.>
<WHAT?>
<THIS FACILITY WILL BE DISMANTLED. ALL ACTIVE AGENTS GO TO GROUND. THE TRAINEES WILL BE TERMINATED. AND WE RETURN HOME.>

<NO. I CAN STOP HIM.>
AND JUST LIKE THAT, I GET MY CHANCE.

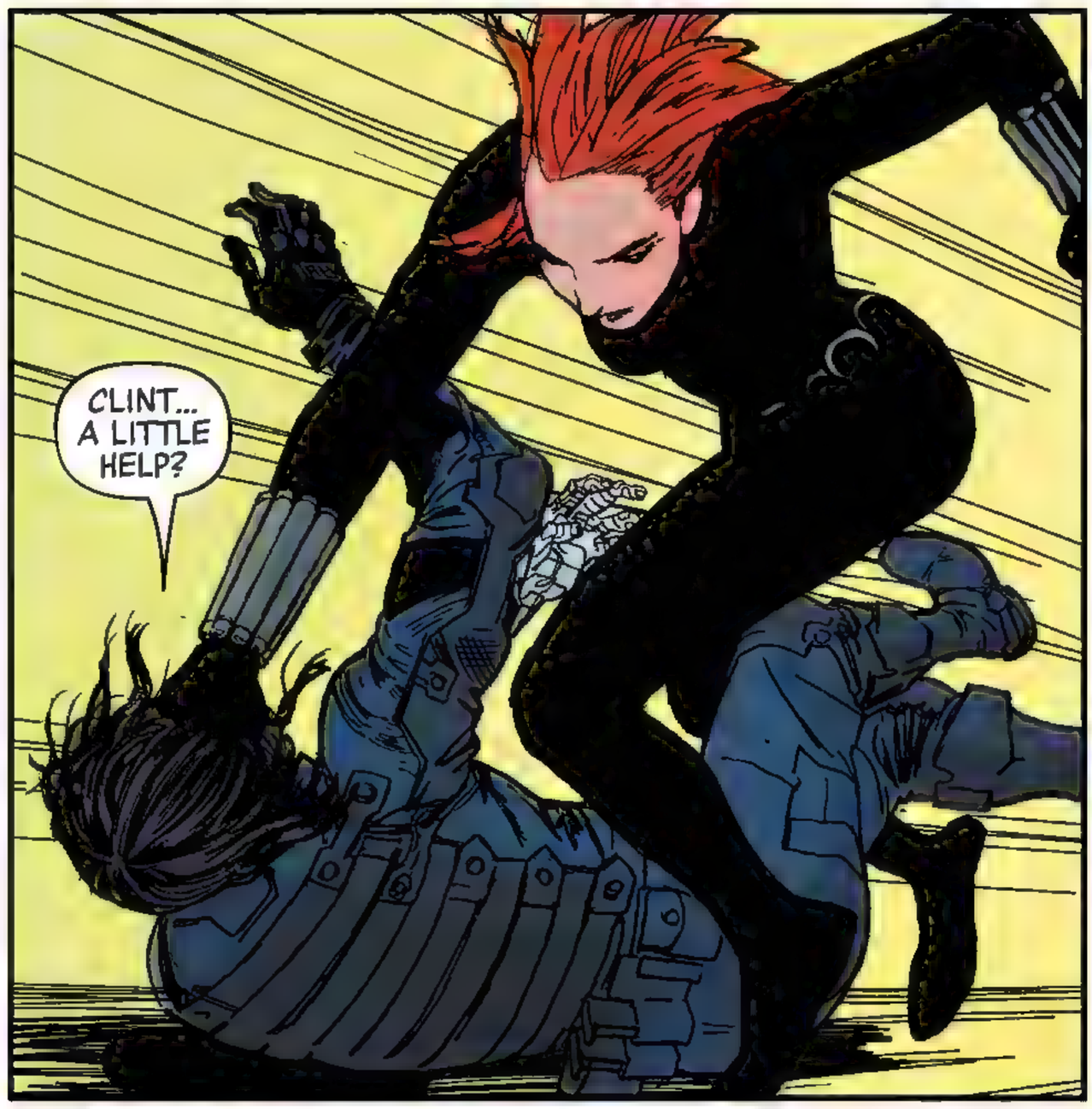
NOW.
HELLO, BOYS.
I HATE DOING THIS TO THEM. THE DUMB LOOKS ON THEIR FACES...


NAT, WHAT THE $%@?!
WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU NEED TO TALK TO US RIGHT NOW.

NATASHA, IT'S US. WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS. WE WANT TO HELP YOU. BUT WE NEED YOU TO PUT THE GUN DOWN, OKAY?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED, BUT EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE--

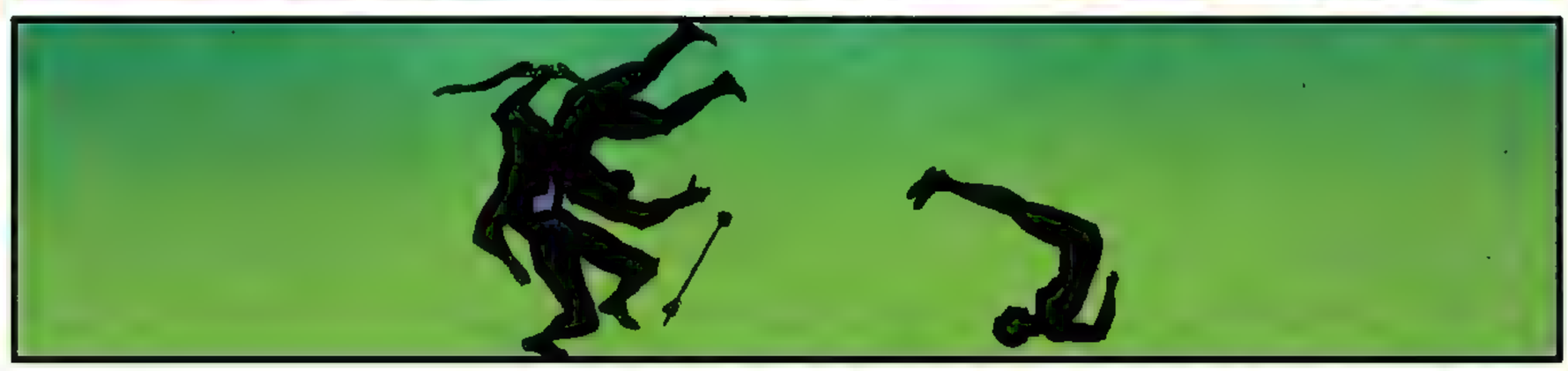
BUT THEY MADE THINGS SO COMPLICATED.

NOW, CLINT!


CLINT... A LITTLE HELP?

HAWKEYE! SNAP OUT OF IT! SHE'S GONNA KILL ME IN A SECOND IF YOU DON'T STOP HER!

HEY!



SNAP

I COULDN'T TAKE THE SHOT.
I NOTICED.

IT'S REALLY HER.
YEAH. IT IS.

CLINT, SLOW DOWN!

THINK. SHE HAD THE DROP ON US. WHY WOULD SHE RUN IN HERE WHEN SHE COULD--

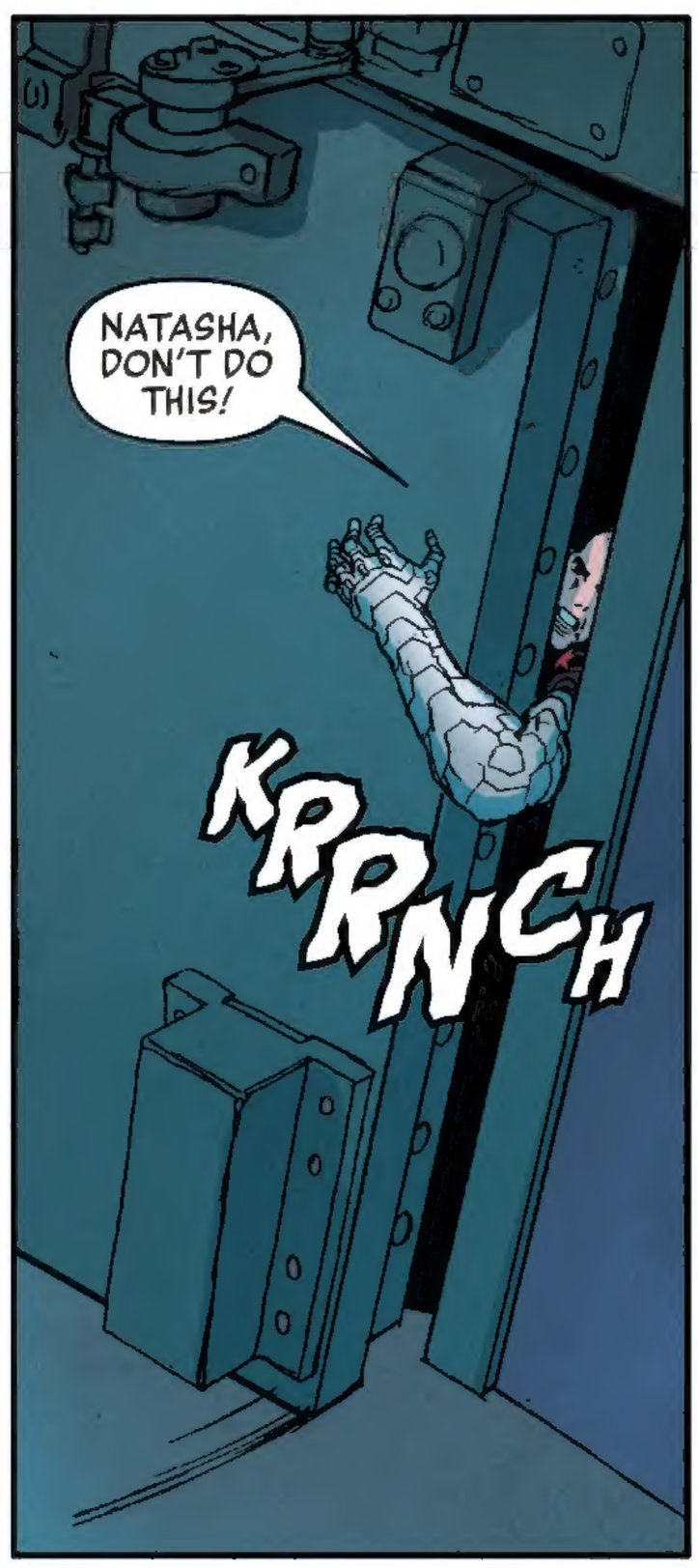
SHHH.
SCRTCH SCRTCH

CAREFUL.

I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. NAT, IF YOU'RE IN THIS ROOM, DON'T KILL US.
REAL GOOD, CLINT.

IT'S OKAY. SHE'S NOT IN THIS WEIRD... BUNKER?
IT'S A PANIC ROOM. EVERY RED ROOM SAFE HOUSE HAS THEM.

=SCRTCH= I'M SORRY IT HAD TO COME TO THIS, BOYS.
NO!


NATASHA, DON'T DO THIS!
KRRNCH

I GUESS THIS IS WHY SHE'D RUN IN--
PLEASE SHUT THE @$%# UP.

TO BE CONCLUDED!

NEXT:

THE CURE FOR PAIN

ZONE